

Questions and Answers

Revised 8/8/07

EPA's Request for Proposals for Training and Technical Assistance for Small and/or Rural Public Water Systems

This document summarizes questions received and responses provided by EPA regarding the Agency's Request for Proposals (RFP) for Training and Technical Assistance for Small and/or Rural Public Water Systems (available at this URL:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html#eleven>).

Listed below are questions emailed to the Agency for this RFP as of August 7, 2007.

Questions and Answers:

1. Are individual states eligible to apply for the grant?

Yes, states are eligible to apply. Eligibility Information is described in Section III. of the RFP. Interested applicants are encouraged to read the RFP carefully, especially the Funding Opportunity Description in Section I. and Selection Criteria in Section V.A. of the RFP. All eligible applicants will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights described in this section.

2. Are individual public water systems eligible to apply for the grant?

If individual public water systems are non-profit entities, they are eligible to apply for the grant. However, if the public water system is a profit-making organization, it would be ineligible. Eligibility Information is described in Section III. of the RFP. Interested applicants are encouraged to read the RFP carefully, especially the Funding Opportunity Description in Section I. and Selection Criteria in Section V.A. of the RFP. All eligible applicants will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights described in this section.

3. Are foreign non-profit organizations eligible to apply for the grant?

Yes, non-profit organizations are included under Eligibility Information in Section III. of the RFP. *Foreign* non-profit organizations are eligible provided the foreign non-profit organization proposes a project to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems located in the United States or one of its territories or possessions. Foreign non-profit organizations would not be eligible to provide similar training and technical assistance outside of the United States or one of its territories or possessions.

4. Are foreign governmental agencies eligible to apply for the grant?

No. Foreign governments are not listed among the eligible applicants in Section III. A, of the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

5. Are other federal agencies eligible to apply for the grant?

No. Federal agencies are not included under Eligibility Information in Section III. of the RFP.

6. Is there a reasonable chance of winning the award if the proposal is limited to one or a few states?

Applicants will be evaluated based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package. The first criterion, National Training and Technical Assistance Approach, carries 40 points (out of a total of 145), and evaluates the applicant's ability to make the training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states through a combination of face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance. Applicants who are able to demonstrate a broad, national reach will score higher under this criterion. Conversely, applicants who are able to provide training in one or a few states will score lower under this criterion. Interested applicants are encouraged to read the RFP carefully, especially the Funding Opportunity Description in Section I. and Selection Criteria in Section V.A. of the RFP. All eligible applicants will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights described in this section.

7. Can the proposal include subcontractors who are for-profit? Can we partner with contractors or consultants?

Yes, as described in Award Information in Section II. of the RFP, funding may be used to acquire services or to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance to fund partnerships provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposals. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal based solely on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient" even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners" or "co-applicants" or members of a "coalition" or "consortium." The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

8. How do you define small systems?

There are various definitions of small systems within the regulations. However, for purposes of this RFP, we define small systems as those public water systems serving a

population of 10,000 or less. The statutory authority of this RFP is Section 1442 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, which does not define small public water systems. Section 1442 does refer to Section 1452 (Drinking Water State Revolving Funds) which defines small public water systems as those public water systems which regularly serve fewer than 10,000 persons. Additionally, grants providing training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems in the past have focused on public water systems serving less than 10,000 persons.

9. Does this funding opportunity provide for training & technical assistance for non-PWSs (including individual wells and small well based systems not covered under SDWA)?

The Funding Opportunity Description in Section I. identifies the goal of the funding opportunity as providing training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems to develop and expand the capabilities of those systems to meet the requirements of SDWA. Assistance will be provided to address two National Priority Areas: (1) Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection; and (2) Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations. Applicants will be evaluated based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion from Section V.A. Selection Criteria is addressed in the proposal package. Interested applicants are encouraged to read the RFP carefully, especially the Funding Opportunity Description in Section I. and Selection Criteria in Section V.A. of the RFP. All eligible applicants will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights described in this section. As described in Section VII. Agency Contact of the RFP, we cannot comment on or provide advice on how your organization may be able to respond to the evaluation criteria.

10. What is the anticipated award date for the grant?

The expected award date is December 2007.

11. Are appendices permitted, and if so, are there any limits on the number and size of appendices?

Appendices are permitted. As described in Section IV.C. Content of Application Submission supporting materials (such as support letters and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit, thus, there are no limits on the size of appendices.

12. May an organization submit a proposal that addresses one segment within one of the two priority areas?

There is nothing in the announcement that restricts an applicant from addressing one segment within a National Priority Area. All applications need to be complete and must comply with the criteria in the announcement (sections I, III and IV). Each complete application package that satisfies the threshold criteria in Section III will be evaluated

individually against the criteria in Section V based on the content in the application package.

13. The project completion period is indicated as 18 months. Does the 18-month period commence following the formal awarding of the agreement or following the signed acceptance of the award by the recipient?

The project should be complete within 18 months of award. The award date and acceptance by the recipient typically occurs within two weeks.

14. Will award recipients be able to recover indirect costs in accordance with negotiated overhead rates?

Yes, award recipients can recover indirect costs in accordance with negotiated overhead rates.

15. Can we use this grant to help pay for construction costs of a new water treatment facility?

No. Funding for infrastructure, such as *drinking water treatment facilities*, is provided in part through each state's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. You may check with VA's Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/DrinkingWater/financial/> for additional information.

EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water provides technical assistance to small facilities. A major focus is on capacity development, which refers to the technical, financial and managerial capacity of a system to provide safe drinking water. The program also provides information about treatment technology options for small systems. Additional information is available at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html>.

Funding is available for *wastewater treatment facilities* through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Information about Virginia's Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund is available at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/cap/wwovrview.html>.

EPA's Office of Wastewater Management provides water and wastewater services to tribal and community leaders through its "Small Communities Team." Additional information about resources available to small communities can be found at their web site at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/index.htm>.